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## HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

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Landmark/District:	<b>Anacostia Historic District</b>	(x) Agenda
Address:	<b>2001-2027 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE</b>	
Meeting Date:	<b>September 24, 2015</b>	(x) New construction
Case Number:	<b>15-504</b>	(x) Subdivision
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Tim Dennée</b>	(x) Concept

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The applicant, Four Points Development, agent for the four property owners—JCX-Right Realty, Inc., Curtis Properties, Inc., H.S. White and Abel Woldu<sup>1</sup>—requests the Board’s review of a concept to combine eight lots, retain the historic commercial buildings on the parcel and build around and behind them. The uses would include retail, a theater, and apartments. The project would connect to another immediately to the south (at 2041 MLK and stretching to V Street), as part of a single Planned Unit Development application.

This project would include a large lot facing Shannon Place which is outside the historic district, but whose combination with the Martin Luther King Avenue lots would bring that portion of the project into the Board’s purview. Most of the new construction along Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue would top out at three stories, but the larger portion of the project, built on the rear of the historic lots and back to Shannon Place, would rise to seven stories.

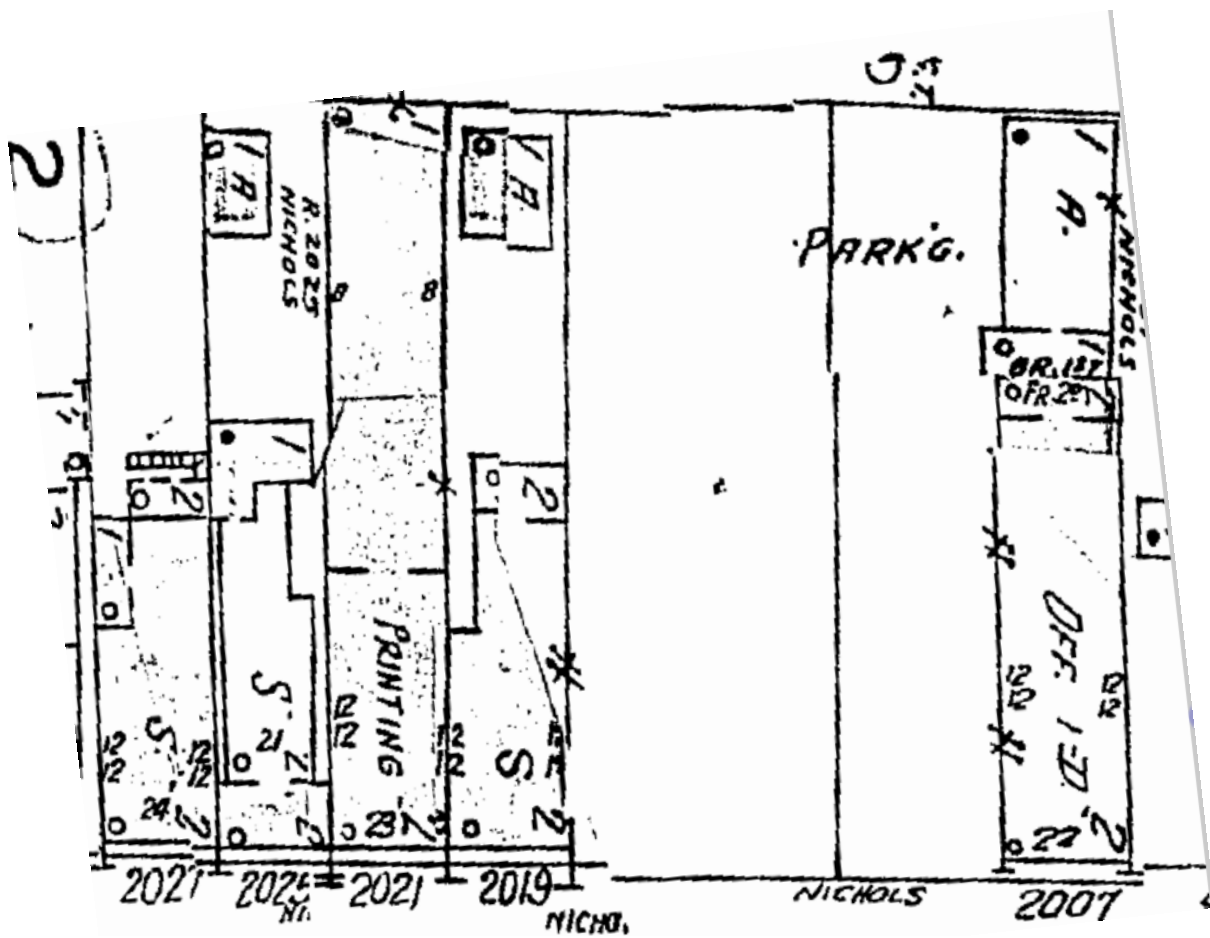
### Demolition and repair

The plans do not depict well the proposed demolition, but as suggested by Sheet 13, most of the contributing buildings would be retained whole. A print shop addition to 2021 MLK—added to the first Union Savings Bank/Anacostia Bank building (1906)—would be demolished, as would a one-story accessory addition to 2007 MLK, which was originally a funeral parlor (1929). A little of the rear of the two-story section of 2007 MLK would go as well, part original block, part addition. The amount and nature of the demolition proposed do not suggest that it would constitute demolition “in significant part” of the character-defining portions of the contributing buildings. Still, there should be a preservation scope of work offered to compensate for the demolition and other effects. Both 2007 and 2019 Martin Luther King could use some façade restoration.

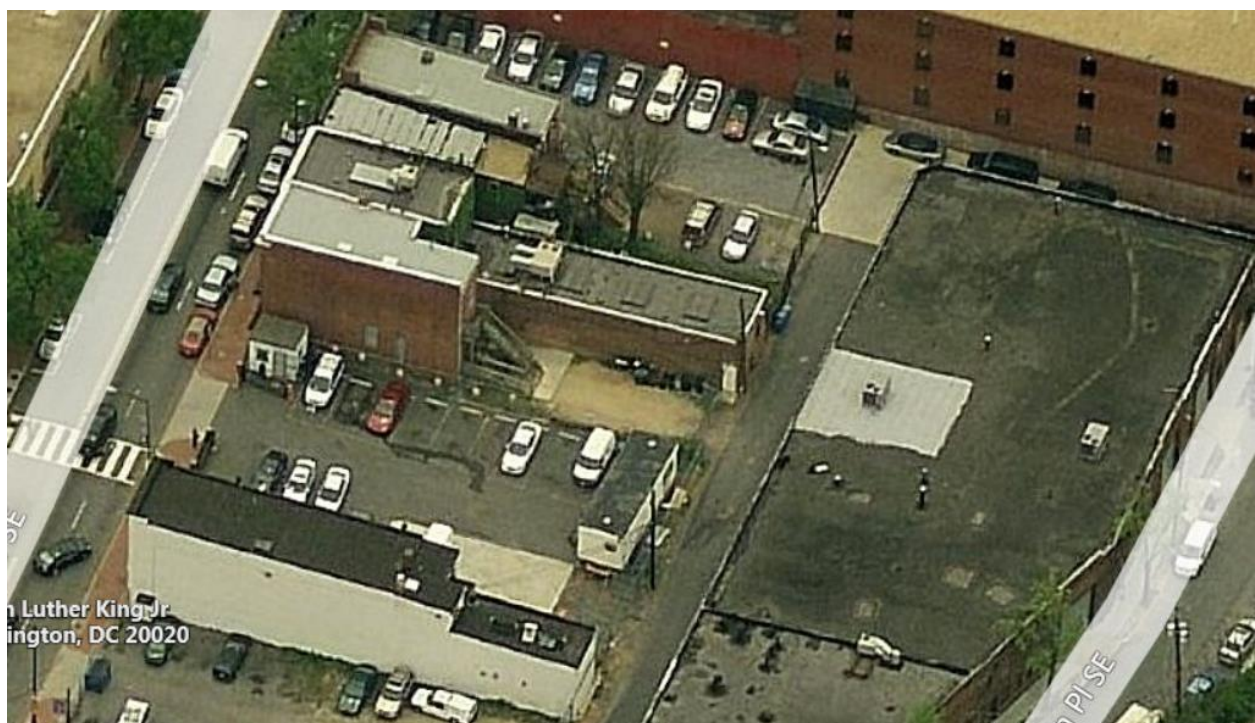
Also to be razed are the recently built temporary offices of Miliani Construction, at 2001 MLK, and the Anacostia Playhouse, a former warehouse that stands outside the historic district on Shannon Place. It is the proposed demolition of the playhouse that necessitates it being incorporated in the new construction.

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<sup>1</sup> At the time this report was written, no record has been received of the consent of the latter two owners to the applicant presenting a project involving their properties. If no such acknowledgment is received by close of business September 22, the case will be deferred to a later date.



*The historic buildings retain footprints similar to those depicted in this 1926 Sanborn map. The buildings at 2007 and 2021 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue have substantial additions, and they were added early.*



### New construction

As the project would stand at the edge of the historic district, its appearance from Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue is the most important concern.

The H-shaped plan for the apartments breaks up a long building and recesses it somewhat from the MLK buildings. The project could make better use of the courtyard space between the residential building and the public ones. The lower buildings in the foreground help mitigate the effect of the height of the apartments on the character of the historic district but a nearly blank residential core at one leg of the “H” looms over the historic buildings.

Holding the new construction to three stories along the avenue makes it more compatible to the two-story historic buildings. The upward extension of the projections on these new pieces is not helping the matter, however, nor improving their compositions. The projection on the playhouse does break up a broad façade, but it makes less sense hanging over a portion of the building that is not an entrance or other important feature. The glassy northern half of the playhouse has some scale issues relative to the neighborhood’s historic architecture, but it is at least coherent as a lobby. The south half of the building front, enclosing a stair, has a less straightforward expression of function and composition.

The commercial building at the northeast corner of the site needs work. A corner bay or oriel could be a successful feature to incorporate, but as designed it does not sufficiently address a larger composition which currently lacks hierarchy and differentiation. The building’s high ground floor is scaled and detailed to nearly match the two floors above, and the march of piers and columns of windows around the building is relentless. The entrance should probably not be exactly the size of the oriel glazing above.

The perspectives are more useful than the elevations for understanding the new building’s appearance, and they put it in a more favorable light. The drawings do not make clear how rooftop mechanical equipment and enclosures will look (and we can probably expect telecommunications companies to seek to place antennas on the building as well). It would be helpful to have additional perspectives from the south at ground level. Any roof decks should have unobtrusive, set-back railings.

The materials are not specified, but look to be principally terra cotta on the largest mass, brick on the three-story corner building, and glass and perhaps metal on the theater facade. The exact materials and details will be crucial to success, of course. The masonry in the renderings could be interpreted as jumbo brick, for instance, which would be too large a module.

Parking entrances would be located on U Street and Shannon Place, away from the avenue. A future loading dock would presumably also be reached from Shannon.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board support the general outlines of the project but request revisions along the lines suggested above.*